



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Chugach
National
Forest

3301 'C' Street
Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99503-3998

File Code: 1950-1

Date: January 23, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

The City of Whittier seeks to improve the Shotgun Cove Road from the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Blackstone Road in Whittier, Alaska, east 2.59 miles to the end of the existing pioneer road. Enclosed is the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Environmental Assessment which discloses the potential effects of reconstruction of the existing road. There are no National Forest System lands along the route (although there are National Forest System lands south and east of the project area). Under the 1982 CNI Settlement Agreement (CNI, 1982) (Chugach Natives Incorporated, now known as Chugach Alaska Corporation), an easement was reserved to the United States (CNI Section 13, B, (20)) for a portion of the route through Section 18 to be administered by the Forest Service. The easement constitutes an interest in National Forest System land (36 CFR Part 215.2). Section 13, K (2) of the CNI Settlement Agreement requires the United States to assign and convey all right, title and interest of the Shotgun Cove Road Easement to the State of Alaska. BLM has the authority and responsibility to reassign these rights for the United States and has begun the process to convey this easement to the State of Alaska.

I am selecting Alternative 3, which includes reconstruction of the existing road to a two-lane facility with improved alignment, grade and width standards, replacing two bridges at Cove Creek, improving overall access and safety for travelers, and widening the road bed, involving hill cuts, fills and other excavation. Retaining walls, culverts and roadside ditches would also be constructed. Existing access to private structures along the pioneer road would be modified. The action would also include enhancing the City of Whittier's recreational facilities, including the Salmon Run picnic area and the Emerald Cove trailhead and constructing new recreational facilities such as a multipurpose path and a scenic viewpoint.

Design work is expected to be completed during the spring of 2004, with construction beginning during the summer of 2004.

Construction/reconstruction of the road is planned under a project agreement between the City of Whittier, Chugach Alaska Corporation, USDA Forest Service and Federal Highways Administration. The Forest Service's role is to ensure regulatory performance of the environmental analysis process. Congress appropriated funds for this project in the fiscal years 2001 and 2002 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act within the Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program. Funds appropriated to this program are subject to the limitations and controls, which dictate that funds must be spent on a public road role. All projects constructed with federal funding must comply with federal requirements, including compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Environmental Assessment served that purpose. The Forest Service is serving as the lead federal agency by providing advice to the City of Whittier on the applicability of work performed under contract and by determining eligibility for reimbursement under the provisions of the Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program and federal rules for financial management and acquisitions.

The purpose of this letter is to provide notification of my decision. Copies of the Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment can be obtained from the City of Whittier, main office; the Forest Supervisor's Office, Chugach National Forest, 3301 C St., Anchorage, Alaska, 99503; and the Glacier Ranger District Office, P.O. Box 129, Forest Station Road, Girdwood, Alaska, 99587. The Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment are also available on the Internet at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/Chugach/>



This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. Individuals or organizations who submitted substantive comments during the comment period specified at 36 CFR Part 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must be in writing, meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR Part 215.14 and be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer:

Regional Forester, Alaska Region
U.S.D.A. Forest Service
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628
E-mail: appeals-alaska-regional-office@fs.fed.us
FAX (907) 586-7852

The Notice of Appeal, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, express delivery or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at the correct location within 45 calendar days of publication of notice of this decision in the Anchorage Daily News, the newspaper of record for the Chugach National Forest. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Appeals submitted electronically, including attachments, must be in an electronic format compatible with Microsoft Word. Hand delivered appeals will be accepted at the Alaska Region, R-10 Headquarters, Federal Building, 5th Floor, 709 W. 9th St., Juneau, Alaska during normal business hours (8:00 am through 4:30 pm) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Implementation of decisions subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215, may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period.

For additional information regarding this Decision and Environmental Assessment please call Chuck Frey, Supervisor's Office, Anchorage, at (907) 743-9557. Thank you for your interest in the City of Whittier's project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joe L. Meade

JOE L. MEADE
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure